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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001343

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2018
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: MASKIYOT: 20 HOUSES APPROVED IN NEW WEST BANK
SETTLEMENT

REF: A. TEL AVIV 1599
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 347
[1](#)C. 06 JERUSALEM 5065
[1](#)D. 06 TEL AVIV 4994

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Settlers confirmed to PolOff July 24 a decision by MOD Barak to approve 20 construction of houses in Maskiyot, in the upper Jordan Valley, for families evacuated from Shirat Hayam in Gaza in 2005. The houses are part of a 2006 plan initiated and then canceled by then-MOD Amir Peretz. Jordan Valley Regional Council Chairman Dubi Tal told PolOff he expects construction to begin by November. Permanent civilian houses built at Maskiyot - a military training camp - constitute a new West Bank settlement. END SUMMARY

Defense Ministry Approves 20 New
Houses in Jordan Valley Nahal Camp

[1](#)2. (C) Jordan Valley Regional Council Chairman Dubi Tal told PolOff July 24 that MOD Barak approved construction of 20 houses in Maskiyot. Following a 15-day public review period, Tal said infrastructure preparations would begin. Tal said he expects the houses to be built in the same area that then-MOD Amir Peretz approved in 2006 (Peretz subsequently ordered construction halted after U.S. and international protest). The houses are intended for families evacuated from the former Gaza Strip settlement of Shirat Hayam in 2005, who are presently living in temporary housing in nearby settlements. (Note: Currently, several families live in six trailers and existing structures at Maskiyot. The site was established as a military training school Nahal in 1982. End Note)

[1](#)3. (C) Tal told PolOff the Maskiyot approval is "just a headline", calling it "insignificant and overdue" and proclaiming hope for approval of 2,000 houses at the site. Addressing Maskiyot's original establishment as a military training base, Tal claimed Maskiyot "has always had a civilian presence."

[1](#)4. (C) Yesha Council Chairman Dani Dayan told PolOff July 24 that MOD Barak approved the 20 new houses but denied press reports that the move was a "reward" for settler agreement to move outposts. Maskiyot settlers told PolOff July 24 they had not been officially informed of the decision and asked if were true.

Comment

[1](#)5. (C) Construction of permanent civilian houses at Maskiyot, which is currently a Nahal site under the

jurisdiction of the IDF, would, as we understand the situation, constitute the establishment of a new West Bank settlement, contrary to GOI Roadmap commitments and promises by PM Olmert at the time of the Annapolis Conference. The envisioned housing plots are well outside Maskiyot's current built-up area and would significantly increase its existing footprint. END COMMENT.
WALLES